

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

October 18, 2011

The Los Angeles County health education workforce provides residents with vital health education to promote healthy living, including preventive care services. Health Educators partner with governmental and community agencies to assess community needs and plan, implement, and evaluate appropriate interventions. Their goal is to empower individuals and communities with the information and skills necessary to prevent or manage disease and injury.

In addition, Health Educators provide health professionals, elected officials, and others with information, training, and evidence-based tools that are tested to meet the health needs of diverse populations.

This year the Department of Public Health joins the Society of Public Health Education to promote *National Health Education Week*. Its purpose is to honor the dedication and service of the countywide Health Education workforce and call attention to this year's theme, *Health Literacy: Gateway to Improving the Public's Health*.

Poor health literacy is a stronger predictor of a person's health than age, income, employment status, education level, and race, and consequently the County of Los Angeles has a vital interest in promoting and improving health literacy, defined as a person's ability to obtain, process, and understand basic health information.

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Nearly nine out of ten U.S. adults have problems finding and using health information. In Los Angeles County, 53% of working-age adults have low literacy levels that affect their ability to search for and use health information, adopt healthy behaviors, and act on important public health alerts.

Improving health literacy skills requires a comprehensive approach, including the use of plain language techniques, culturally and linguistically appropriate communication, participatory design, field-tested materials, policy change, and advocacy. Los Angeles County's Health Education workforce is uniquely positioned to help ensure that the information disseminated by the healthcare and public health systems will expand the knowledge and improve the skills of consumers receiving it.

The County of Los Angeles is committed to addressing low health literacy as a public health problem and improving health literacy throughout the County. The Board of Supervisors strongly supports its health education workforce and their efforts to improve health literacy rates throughout the County.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim the week of October 16-22, 2011 as National Health Education Week in Los Angeles County, and encourage all individuals, organizations, and communities to implement at least one strategy designed to raise awareness of health literacy and promote changes to improve health literacy during National Health Education Week.

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